

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 20

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MNUC, PEPR, SN, US

SUBJ: SINGAPORE CRITICISM OF US WAFFLING ON NEUTRON BOMB

1. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. STRAITS TIMES EDITORIAL APRIL 7 CRITICIZES ALLEGED ADMINISTRATION INDECISIVENESS ON NEUTRON BOMB, AND TENDENCY TO PUT PACKAGING ABOVE SUBSTANCE. ABANDONING BOMB WITHOUT WRINGING CONCESSIONS FROM RUSSIANS DESCRIBED AS "NAIVE IN THE EXTREME," IN VIEW OF ABSENCE OF RUSSIAN RESTRAINT IN AFRICA, "TOUGH TALKING ON SALT," AND RISING FORCE LEVELS. FURTHER, EDITORIAL NOTES CANCELLATION "PARTICULARLY WITHOUT PROPER CONSULTATIONS" WITH PRINCIPAL ALLIES COULD RESULT IN "EROSION OF CONFIDENCE WITHIN THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE AND SEVERE DOUBTS ABOUT POLITICAL JUDGMENT IN THE AMERICAN LEADERSHIP." COMMENT: EDITORIAL REFLECTS GOS VIEWS ON NEED FOR US TO REMAIN STRONG AND KEEP ITS GUARD UP, AND GOS WORRIES THAT USSR WILL BE ABLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF US LACK OF RESOLVE AND NAIVETE. TEXT OF EDITORIAL FOLLOWS. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

2. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. "THE WHOLE WORLD, LED BY THE NEW YORK TIMES, SEEMS TO KNOW THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS TAKEN A DECISION TO ABORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEUTRON BOMB, BUT WHITE HOUSE OFFICIALS ARE STILL CLAIMING THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NOTHING IS FINAL. THE TROUBLE, IT WOULD APPEAR, LIES NOT IN ANY LAST DITCH EFFORT TO CHANGE THE PRESIDENT'S MIND, ALTHOUGH UNDOUBTEDLY HE WILL BE UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE FROM DEFENSE CHIEFS AND EUROPEAN ALLIES TO DO SO. NO ANNOUNCEMENT FROM MR. CARTER'S OFFICE HAS BEEN ISSUED BECAUSE, ACCORDING TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT, THERE IS A PROBLEM OF HOW TO PORTRAY THE CANCELLATION. PACKAGING,

RATHER THAN SUBSTANCE, IS UPPERMOST IN THE THINKING OF THE GEORGIA MAFIA MR. CARTER HAS SURROUNDED HIMSELF WITH AT PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE. CONSEQUENTLY, AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY AS A WHOLE HAS PAID MORE ATTENTION TO THE FLUFF AND THE PRESENTATION OF ISSUES FOR SOME PERIOD OF TIME. LET THERE BE NO MISTAKE THAT THEREIN LIES A FLAW, BUT WHETHER IT WILL PROVE FATAL OR NOT REMAINS TO BE SEE,.

"MR. CARTER HAS DECIDED AGAINST THE PRODUCTION OF THE BOMB REPORTEDLY AGAINST THE ADVICE OF MOST OF HIS SENIOR FOREIGN POLICY AND DEFENSE ADVISERS. THE MAJOR ARGUMENT IN HIS FAVOR IS IN THE HOPE THAT BY SHOWING RESTRAINT, THE SOVIET UNION WILL RECIPROCATATE IN THE DEPLOYMENT OF ITS NEW NUCLEAR WEAPONS. BUT IF THE AMERICANS FOREGO THE NEUTRON BOMB SIMPLY BASED ON FAITH IN THE DECENCY AND GOOD SENSE OF THE RUSSIANS, WITHOUT ANY HARD CONCESSION WRUNG OUT IN SECRET NEGOTIATIONS, THEY ARE BEING NAIVE IN THE EXTREME.

"MOSCOW SINCE JIMMY CARTER'S INAUGURATION HAS SHOWN NO SIGN OF BEING CONCILIATORY OR RESTRAINED. ON THE CONTRARY, THEIR TRACK RECORD IN ANGOLA AND ETHIOPIA, THEIR STEADILY RISING FORCE LEVELS AND THEIR TOUGH TALKING ON SALT PROVES THAT THEY ARE PREPARED TO PUSH AS FAR AS THEY CAN. THE ONLY THING MR. CARTER MAY SUCCEED IN DOING IS GIVING UP A VALUABLE CARD AT GENEVA, BECAUSE SOME EXPERTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BELIEVE CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEUTRON WEAPON COULD HAVE FORCED MOSCOW TO SLOW DOWN THE SS-20 MISSILE PROGRAM.

"LOSS OF CONFIDENCE

"MILITARY ANALYSTS ARE SAID TO BE OF THE OPINION THAT THE NEUTRON BOMB IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE ANSWER NATO HAS TO THE OVERWHELMING CONVENTIONAL SUPERIORITY OF THE SOVIETS IN EUROPE. AFTER MONTHS OF DISCUSSIONS, EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS HAVE BECOME CONVINCED OF THE DESIRABILITY OF HAVING THIS ADDITION TO THE NATO ARSENAL. IF MR. CARTER SUDDENLY ABANDONED THE NEUTRON BOMB, PARTICULARLY WITHOUT PROPER CONSULTATIONS WITH HIS PRINCIPAL EUROPEAN ALLIES, THERE COULD BE AN EROSION OF CONFIDENCE WITHIN THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE AND SEVERE DOUBTS ABOUT POLITICAL JUDGMENT IN THE AMERICAN LEADERSHIP. ALREADY, SOME EUROPEAN DEFENSE OFFICIALS HAVE BEGUN SPEAKING IN THIS VEIN. THUS THE NEUTRON BOMB, EVEN IF IT IS NOT ABSOLUTELY VITAL TO EUROPEAN SECURITY, HAS ACQUIRED A PSYCHOLOGICAL VALUE IN REASSURING WEST EUROPEANS, AND IT CANNOT BE DISCARDED WITHOUT COMMENSURATE SAFEGUARDS.

"WITHOUT THE NEUTRON BOMB, NATO DEFENSES IN THE  
EVENT OF A SOVIET THRUST IN CENTRAL EUROPE COULD BE  
SERIOUSLY HANDICAPPED, FORCING THE EARLY USE OF TACTICAL  
NUCLEAR WEAPONS TO BREAK UP THE RUSSIAN ARMoured OFFENSIVE.  
THIS IN TURN COULD INVITE THE USE OF SOVIET NUCLEAR ARMS  
ESCALATING TO AN EXCHANGE OF ICBMS (INTERCONTINENTAL  
BALLISTIC MISSILES). FURTHERMORE, A STUDY BY AN AUTHORI-  
TATIVE WESTERN THINK TANK HAS WARNED THAT EXCESSIVE CON-  
CESSIONS BY THE U.S. IN NEW SALT TREATY COULD FREEZE  
AMERICAN STRATEGIC SUPERIORITY AND ENCOURAGE S SURPRISE  
SOVIET ATTACK. FROM A CURSORY EXAMINATION OF THE VARIOUS  
FACTORS, IT LOOKS AS THOUGH ABORTING THE NEUTRON BOMB  
IS A THOROUGHLY BAD IDEA. WHY MR. CARTER IS TURNING IN  
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THIS DIRECTION, ASSUMING HE HAS NOT BEEN INFLUENCED BY  
COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA AND PEACENIK PHILOSOPHY, IS A  
MYSTERY. WASHINGTON CANNOT DELAY MUCH LONGER A FORMAL  
STATEMENT ON THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON THE  
QUESTION." END UNCLASSIFIED.  
HOLDRIDGE

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## Message Attributes

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